

AT THE PLAY.

IT is sometimes much pleasanter to write about the future than to write about the past, and this week there is really no past to chronicle in the playgoing world. Nothing new has been produced, and the few plays at present running are too well known to talk about. I must therefore peep into the future, and tell you what I see there. Well, first of all I see, as if written in letters of fire over the front of the Comedy Theatre, "The New Woman." Does a shudder run round the circle of my readers at the fatal legend? We are all mortally tired of her ladyship, are not we? We are all aweary of her noise, and her pother, and her theories, and her affected dress, and her blatant self-assertion. But Mr. Sidney Grundy has taken her in hand and made her into a play, which Mr. Comyns Carr is shortly going to produce—September 1st is the day at present fixed—and depend upon it this new woman is likely to be far more amusing than the wearisome person whom we all know. The company engaged by Mr. Carr is a very fine one, and includes Miss Winifred Emery, Miss Rose Leclercq, Mr. Fred Terry, and others known to fame.

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The Messrs. Gatti have closed their theatre, but they intend shortly to reopen it with a new melodrama, in the writing of which Mr. Haddon Chambers, who has been rather unlucky of late, has had a hand. In the cast will be found Mr. Terriss, Miss Milward, Mr. Harry Nicholls, Mr. Mackintosh, and others. Another melodrama is being rapidly prepared for production at Drury Lane, with a splendid cast, which includes Mrs. John Wood, Miss Beatrice Lamb, and Miss Alma Stanley. Every playgoer who loves humour will give Mrs. Wood a hearty welcome back to the stage. She has been absent from it far too long, and there is no one to take the place she fills so cleverly. Mr. Alexander will reopen the St. James's Theatre later on with "The Masqueraders," Miss Evelyn Milward playing Dulcie Larondie instead of Mrs. Pat Campbell, who has seceded from the company. Mr. Beerbohm-Tree will reproduce "A Bunch of Violets" after his provincial tour, and later in the year will travel to Berlin, in order to act "Hamlet" in German. In the early spring he will take his company over to America. Mr. Wyndham hopes to shortly produce a new play by Mr. H. A. Jones, at the Criterion. At the Lyceum we are to see "The Queen of Brilliants," by Brandon Thomas and M. Jakobowski, the lovely Lilian Russell taking the chief part, and Terry's Theatre has been taken for the production of a new farce. Toole's Theatre has also been let, and "A Trip to China-town," rechristened, is to be played there shortly. And lastly, Mrs. Anna Ruppert, an actress of whom Mr. Clement Scott thinks great things, has taken the Princess's, and means to bring out Mr. Scott's version of Sardou's "Odette" some time in October, of course playing the principal part herself. So you see we shall have plenty to occupy us during the autumn.

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Mr. Oscar Wilde tells me that his new play is in the hands of Mr. Lewis Waller, who hopes to bring it out at the Haymarket Theatre on or about New Year's Day. Mr. Waller will play the principal man's part, but who will be his leading lady is not quite decided yet. Negotiations are proceeding with a very great actress indeed, and one who is exceptionally popular just now, but whether they will come to anything remains to be seen. The play is not a costume piece, as has been rumoured, but is quite modern, and no doubt stuffed with epigrams. Mr. Lewis Waller made a very great hit in "The Woman of No Importance," with which he made the tour of the provinces, and his ambition now is to establish himself in London as a popular actor-manager. I hear that his wife, Miss Florence West, has been unwell lately, and has been travelling in Switzerland, where she has gained much good from the glacier air.

FIERROT.